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SALT TWO
SESSION I
A-87

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
U.S. SALT DELEGATION
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND.

DATE: December 14, 1972

TIME: 6:45 - 8:30 p.m.

PLACE: Soviet Mission, Geneva

SUBJECT: Strategic Bombers, Soviet Heavy Bombers, Air Defense

PARTICIPANTS: US

USSR

Col C. G. FitzGerald

Col V. P. Starodubov

Cdr G. L. Atkinson
(part-time)

Col V. V. Budantsev

During the Soviet Ambassador's reception for the two SALT Delegations, the two Soviet participants commented on Bombers and Air Defense.

Strategic Bombers, Soviet Heavy Bombers, ICBMs and SLBMs

Col Budantsev opened this subject with a statement to the effect that General Allison was correct in asking his question at the December 8th Mini-Plenary--the USSR proposal on heavy bombers does indeed envisage "the withering away of bombers." He and Col Starodubov added the following "clarifications" on the Soviet "rationale"; present Soviet heavy bombers and U. S. B-52s are obsolete, all of them having been deployed more than fifteen years ago. In response to my question, Col Budantsev said he believed that the IOC of the B-52 was 1952 while that of Soviet heavy bombers was 1954. Thus, the situation in regard to heavy bombers was such that the time is favorable for eliminating them as strategic weapons. Col Starodubov added the thought that if agreement were reached on this proposal it would be much simpler for the sides to solve the problem of levels of ICBMs and SLBMs since we would only have to deal with two major types of systems rather than three. Col Budantsev added that the U. S. side itself, in talking about FBA, has said that assessing aircraft is a complex

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problem since it is difficult to classify aircraft because of their different characteristics, payload capabilities, etc.

I noted that the Soviet position on bombers just didn't make any sense. Moreover, it even appeared to be in conflict with current rumors that the USSR may already be deploying a new heavy bomber to replace the Tu-95. Col Budantsev asked "where?" I replied that I didn't know but would assume that the rumors suggested deployment within the USSR. He said this was not true. The Soviet side has no plans to deploy a new heavy bomber.

Air Defense

Col Starodubov then turned to air defenses. He said there was no basis for discussing air defenses. I told him I disagreed. I said that it is not only the fact that air defenses must be limited if bomber armaments are to be limited. Additionally, General Trusov was incorrect in saying that air defense of the country is not strategic. This is contrary to Soviet doctrine. I cited "50 Years of the Soviet Armed Forces" and military dictionaries as authorities. Soviet PVO troops are a separate service, and, according to Soviet doctrine, separate services perform strategic missions, and air defense of an entire nation is certainly a strategic mission.

Col Starodubov did not deny this but did reply that, if there were no bombers armed with nuclear weapons, air defense would not have a strategic mission. The Soviet side would, however, still require air defenses against NATO and other countries. He said that the Soviet side would have no objection to the U.S. building its air defenses to the levels of Soviet PVO. They have no intention of reducing theirs. I replied that such a U.S. buildup would be contrary to the purposes of SALT. Moreover, to paraphrase Minister Pleshakov's remark concerning OLPARs, an effort by the U.S. to build its air defenses up to Soviet levels would necessitate the U.S. population "going without trousers."

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SALDEL:CGFitzGerald:ar
15 December 1972

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